

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1 to 41 (canceled).

Claim 42 (currently amended): A method of operating a gaming system, said method comprising:

- (a) receiving a value total associated with a player, said value total being divisible into a plurality of fees;
- (b) providing the player with an opportunity to perform~~operating~~ at least one play of at least one game for a period of time, the period of time being divisible into a plurality of time intervals, the at least one play involving a chance to receive at least one of a plurality of awards, each one of the awards having a value;
- (c) tracking how many of the time intervals pass during the at least one play of the game;
- (d) deducting one of the fees from the value total for each one of the time intervals which passes, the deduction being independent of any game outcome;
- (e) tracking a balance of, the balance being based on the value total minus the deducted fees;
- (f) adding the value of any received award to the balance;
- (g) as long as the balance remains above a level, continuing to perform steps (e), (d) and (b) through (f)~~until a termination event occurs;~~
- ~~(g)~~(h) after the termination event occurs, determining whether any payout is due to the player based on the balance~~at least one of the deducted fees;~~ and
- ~~(h)~~(i) providing the determined payout, if any, to the player.

Claim 43 (previously presented): The method of Claim 42, wherein for each time interval, said fees deducted from the value total are equal.

Claim 44 (previously presented): The method of Claim 42, wherein each time interval is an equal interval of time.

Claim 45 (cancelled).

Claim 46 (currently amended): The method of Claim 42, which includes determining and displaying at least one payout associated with at least one displayed outcome for at least one play of the game if the balance~~value total~~ is greater than zero after the plurality of time intervals, wherein said determined payout is based on the balance~~any deducted fees~~.

Claim 47 (previously presented): The method of Claim 42, which includes stopping the deducting step at least temporarily during the play.

Claim 48 (withdrawn): A method of operating a gaming system, said method comprising:

- (a) displaying to a player a graphical indicator of an amount of time the player is eligible to play a game;
- (b) displaying to the player a decrease in said amount of time the player is eligible to play the game, wherein said displayed decrease is based on an amount of elapsed time;
- (c) if the player inputs a value amount, displaying to the player an increase in said amount of time the player is eligible to play the game; and
- (d) if the graphical indicator indicates that the player is eligible to play the game and a random determination occurs to trigger the game, determining and displaying a displayed outcome for said triggered game.

Claim 49 (withdrawn): The method of Claim 48, which includes displaying the amount of time the player is eligible to play the game as a group of bars.

Claim 50 (withdrawn): The method of Claim 48, which includes displaying a first amount of time the player is eligible to play the game a first color and displaying a second amount of time the player is eligible to play the game a second, different color.

Claim 51 (currently amended): A gaming system comprising:

at least one display device;

at least one input device;

at least one processor; and

at least one memory device which stores a plurality of instructions, which when executed by the at least one processor, cause the at least one processor to operate with the at least one display device and the at least one input device to:

- (a) receive a value total associated with a player, said value total being divisible into a plurality of fees;
- (b) provide the player with an opportunity to perform~~operate~~ at least one play of at least one game for a period of time, the period of time being divisible into a plurality of time intervals, the at least one play involving a chance to receive at least one of a plurality of awards, each one of the awards having a value;
- (c) track how many of the time intervals pass during the at least one play of the game;
- (d) deduct one of the fees from the value total for each one of time intervals which passes, the deduction being independent of any game outcome;
- (e) track a balance, the balance being based on~~of~~ the value total minus the deducted fees;
- (f) add the value of any received award to the balance;
- ~~(f)~~(g) as long as the balance remains above a level, continue to perform steps ~~(e), (d) and (e)~~ ~~(b) through (f)~~ until a termination event occurs;
- ~~(g)~~(h) after the termination event occurs, determine whether any payout is due to the player based on the balance~~at least one of the deducted fees;~~ and
- ~~(h)~~(i) provide the determined payout, if any, to the player.

Claim 52 (previously presented): The gaming system of Claim 51, wherein for each time interval, said fees deducted from the value total are equal.

Claim 53 (previously presented): The gaming system of Claim 51, wherein each time interval is an equal interval of time.

Claim 54 (canceled).

Claim 55 (currently amended): The gaming system of Claim 51, wherein when executed by the at least one processor, the plurality of instructions cause the at least one processor to determine and display at least one payout associated with at least one displayed outcome for at least one play of the game if the balance~~value total~~ is greater than zero after the plurality of time intervals, wherein said determined payout is based on the balance~~any deducted fees~~.

Claim 56 (previously presented): The gaming system of Claim 51, wherein when executed by the at least one processor, the plurality of instructions cause the at least one processor to stop the deduction at least temporarily during the play.

Claim 57 (withdrawn): A gaming system comprising:

at least one display device;

at least one input device;

at least one processor; and

at least one memory device which stores a plurality of instructions, which when executed by the at least one processor, cause the at least one processor to operate with the at least one display device and the at least one input device to:

(a) display to a player a graphical indicator of an amount of time the player is eligible to play a game;

(b) display to the player a decrease in said amount of time the player is eligible to play the game, wherein said displayed decrease is based on an amount of elapsed time;

(c) if the player inputs a value amount, display to the player an increase in said amount of time the player is eligible to play the game; and

(d) if the graphical indicator indicates that the player is eligible to play the game and a random determination occurs to trigger the game, determine and display a displayed outcome for said triggered game.

Claim 58 (withdrawn): The gaming system of Claim 57, wherein when executed by the at least one processor, the plurality of instructions cause the at least one processor to display the amount of time the player is eligible to play the game as a group of bars.

Claim 59 (withdrawn): The gaming system of Claim 57, wherein when executed by the at least one processor, the plurality of instructions cause the at least one processor to display a first amount of time the player is eligible to play the game a first color and display a second amount of time the player is eligible to play the game a second, different color.

Claim 60 (new): The method of Claim 42, wherein the termination event includes an election by the player to terminate the at least one play of the game.

Claim 61 (new): The method of Claim 42, wherein the termination event includes a satisfaction of a termination condition other than: (a) an expiration of a designated period of time; or (b) a use of a designated number of plays.

Claim 62 (new): The gaming system of Claim 51, wherein the termination event includes an election by the player to terminate the at least one play of the game.

Claim 63 (new): The gaming system of Claim 51, wherein the termination event includes a satisfaction of a termination condition other than: (a) an expiration of a designated period of time; or (b) a use of a designated number of plays.